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ABSTRACT

This article considers the physiological, psychological, and aesthetical parameters of video on two levels--practical and conceptual. Physiological effects and processes are defined as those which occur within a human being when viewing a video event, while videopsychology focuses on how people use the medium of video and the possibilities for self perception that can occur when presented with various forms of video productions. Seven differences in the viewing of video as compared to the perception of photographs, films, or painted pictures are discussed, as well as differences between television and video, the use of alternative methods of videoprogramming, and video psychotherapy. Videoaesthetics is defined as all information impacts of television which create a coincidence between logical, rational, and emotional thinking. It is recommended that video training should include both theory and practice. (JEG)

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VIDEOPHYSIOLOGY - VIDEOPSYCHOLOGY - VIDEOAESTHETICS

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Dr. M.F. Malik - D. Murphy:

VIDEOPHYSIOLOGY - VIDEOPSYCHOLOGY - VIDEOAESTHETICS

I. Introduction

For a long time is was believed that the television image and sound resemble the artistic and gnoseological values of film image/sound, or radio programs.

During the 50's and 60's, certain specific areas concerning the perceptual or aesthetical values of television programs were explored. Most of the conclusions and discoveries were encompassed within the programme genres and stylistic features.

In contemporary time, the exploration into the values of television pictures/sound or programs is carried from the point of social sciences, visual anthropology (cross-cultural impact of television) or perceptual facilities.

Up until now, very few studies connected the perceptual, psychological and aesthetical parameters of television.

The following article is based on the contemporary findings of the human information processing system, and its specific areas (employed by observation) - creation of the television program; the psychological or psychotherapeutical values of television program events; and some aesthetical conclusions, drawn from both areas.

II. VIDEOPHYSIOLOGY

In this field, the main concern will be within the person, observing the video image/sound or the person creating the video image/sound program. Basically, this is an area of information process or information chain. Energetic change with cata ythic character is understood by the term information. The information chain in its simple scheme, has three parts:

Information source → Transmission Conditions → Receiver and its Response

Each part of the video event (programme, room in which it is perceived, and the persons perceiving it) can contain parts of the final information. Therefore, not only the program itself, but also the perceptual environment, time and person's state of mind, can add or take away from the original story/program .

The television programme is perceived in time as an information cascade, where small units of information overlap to a great extent (in the person's mind). These overlaps, well-known by editors of films, are multilayered (the programme information can be overlapped with activity in the observer's room or other mental process) and dispersed over segments of time (slots with advertisements). The psychodrama of a television sequence has very different characteristics from the psychodrama of a film or a sport event in an arena. Therefore, vastly different quantity and quality of content is stored in the observer's mind from the original taped programme.

Incoming video information acts as a catalyst to other mental processes which occur due to the processing and storing of information in the viewer's brain. In this sense, we witness the information impact. This can provoke the receiver's response, either a latent one (thinking about the TV

programme) or a pronounced, behaved one. It can also start another information chain.

The information chain exists in a certain time and space. Basically, there is a production time, transmission time and perceptual time of a video event. Both production and perceptual time contain a high amount of meta information processing (thinking of video artist, or thinking of TV program viewer). The transmission time is mostly seen as an information delivery process. Due to the element of time and the compression of facts in all three phases of the video event, a necessity of notation starts to become apparent, namely for the creation process (notation is different from the written script, including some information design or scenographic practices); and an information loss occurs frequently during the transmission and perception times. Television technologist talk mostly about a "loss of definition"; in the software part of television programming, whole information structures (ideas, situations, gnoselogical connections) can be lost in a fraction of seconds).

The transmission and perceptual times are believed by most television producers to be identical until the development of biotelemetrical recordings of TV programme processing in the human mind. Now we know that they are switched slightly, with delays ranging from microseconds to several seconds. These delays cause some information overlaps, invisible in the recorded video programme, but are apparent when searching for information concerning it in the viewer's brain. When one information quantum or structure is processed in the brain, the other may not be processed in the same range or intensities. Even if the short term memory could successfully delay certain information quanta (chase in the detective story, stranger in a large crowd) the constant incoming information is more and more overlapped.

Overlaps of the information cascade press the viewer to commulate many small information quanta into large cognitive structures in a short time, creating the commonly known "stereotypes" or "archetypes". Some neuroscientists refer to the term "information pattern", although the pattern structure is vastly simpler than the perceptual stereotype from the televisions programs "All in the Family", "The Dumplings" or"The Jeffersons".

With the introduction of high perceptual stereotypes, the viewer consumes the television programme not as a film with a leaning toward the content (story), but it is often free of the tight attention of the TV set, as soon as he/she finishes the identification of the stereotype. In North American conditions, the identification of the stereotype is done without the teaser time, long before the programme begins. The the situation is a carrer of new information. Situation segments are loosely programmed within an hour or half-hour programme, ranging from 6 - 15 sequences (in films, they are sometimes called "gags").

Perceptual stereotypes and archetypes become <u>contraversial</u> when a highly diversified audience is present. Cultural, racial or demographical differences shape the tastes and fashions of the audience profoundly, melting the past idol of the "average viewer" into a "multi-layered receiver". It results in strongly content oriented TV programmes (television drama) being overpowered in the ratings by variety programmes, serials, situation comedies or quizes.

<u>Geneologically</u>, a video programme attracts(when television is introduced to a new country) viewers by the <u>external formal parts</u> of a TV program. When viewers become used to the new medium, the semantic parts of the programmes (television) with a large choice of programmes, the formal parts of TV programmes (or the <u>aesthetical function of the medium itself</u>) once more close this geneological eclipse with a high importance for the viewer.

There are some differences in videophysiology, compared to the perception of photographic, film or painted pictures.

1. Size parameters

When looking into a television screen, we deal with a targeted, condensed visual field. The peripheral vision area (which works well in all systems of Cinerama, TODD AC, Cinesphere, Polyecran, etc.) are excluded. The picture is projected into the ovea of the eye mostly, in virtual Necker's cube configuration. All these factors influence the speed of television image reading (the television image can be sometimes scanned 5-7 times faster than the film image in cinema or theatre). The increases speed has an important influence on the information cascade delivery into the viewer's brain, permitting much more meta-processing than in any other visual field. This means that a TV viewer can project (on a time basis) much more information into his own content of mind, or can absorb large quantities of information for the TV screen. (This does not mean that the viewer can retain a larger amount of information in his/her memory, or is capable of more, or a higher combinatory thinking). The more information perceived in a given time, the more the TV viewer is cued to the TV set screen ("magic of television for children or housewives ..."). Also the exploitation of transmitting and processing capabilities of the human information system is faster (fatique coming earlier in TV program watching than in cinema, theatre or reading), a factor which influences the length of TV programmes.

2. Intensity parameters

The TV screen emanates translucent light, in brightness approximately 3-7 times higher than most light reflecting surfaces. The spectral characteristic of the TV screen are enhanced too ("unnatural colours" of the TV set). The TV program usually does not account for the normal adaptation time of the human

eye, creating laps or holes in the information cascade. When perceiving a TV program, the delivered intensities of "dark" or "light" are in most cases, above optimal capabilities of the human eye for picture signal transmission. It is not only the maximum extent of delivered intensities, but also the cadence, the cyclical intensities changes patterns. Contemporary TV production routines ("general lighting", "light grid") do not understand the artistic value of the TV picture. Centuries ago, the contrast and brightness of pictures was much better understood by the artists of high Baroque, Rembrandt, Michelangelo.

3. Colour Parameter

On the three-colour system of television, technically the full colour spectrum is delivered. Physiologically, only parts of this spectrum are factually processed by the eye. The undeliverable spectral quanta, emanating from the TV screen creates a physiological factor of "colour resistance", influencing the visual signal delivery. The physiological colour contrast increases to an unbelievable extent (50:1 to 80:1 for television, compared with the highest colour contrast of film in cinema theatre being 20:1). The availability of corrections of the TV set usually does not enhance, but rather decreases the information delivery for the viewer. Generally, the ends of the visible spectrum are more likely to create the colour resistance than the centre of the visible spectrum are.

4. Cinematic Parameters

There are three groups of movement within a TV picture: The movement of electronic beam, the movement of the camera, and the movement within the picture (inner movements: of actors, props, elements).

(a) Movement of electronic beam

Has a constant frequence of basic TV roster; 30 half-pictures per second. The human eye is not capable of following this movement and

adjusts to the temporary failures of it within a few seconds. The former studies, taking into consideration the subliminal effect of TV mosaics are now, after detail biometric tests, considered minimal. This type of movement is important for the video artist anytime she/she creates an artifical video image or enhances the natural TV picture on video synthesizers.

(b) Movement of camera

The effects of panning, tilting or diagonal movements follow similar characteristics, as in the film image. But in the video image certain characteristics become more or less important:

In panning: The "passing" side of the image is preferred in video before the "coming" side. Depending on the visual reading effect, fast pan intensification effect of the direction of panning.

In tilting: The more extrapolation occuring, the higher the speed of the tilting. Tilting up (fast) decreases extrapolation (the viewer looks up more), tilting down (slow) increases extrapolation.

In diagonal movement: The enhancement of the two sides of the picture always occurs either at the head sides when the movement is slow, or the back ones when the movement is faster.

Generally, the most important factor in the video image is the association of the camera movement with the semantic reason of movement. The "subjective TV camera" is very often perceived more as a gimmick by the viewer than as an expression of subjective content.

(c) Image Movements

The optical transformation is imperative (selected lenses). This general scale of movement of the visual field applies to the video image:

1° per second or less: not noticeable at all, static.

2°-5° per second: "normal" or "convenient" movement when within a movement where the viewer is able to perceive the whole image.

10° per second or more: "fast" movement, where the viewer perceives only a moving part of the image.

The volume of the moved part of the image determines the feeling of movement in the viewer's perception, closely to the logarithmic rule. It also depends on the densities of the moving parts of the image. (McLaren explored this rule in his film 'Spheres').

Successive Movements

If you move part of the image in several, shortly succeeding shots, the feeling of movement decreases. On the other hand, small movement within a series of static shots will be significantly perceived by the viewer.

Domain Movements

If the main element of the picture moves (perceptually established domain), the speed of the movement can be increased greatly (Mickey Mouse running). The domain can be pictorially simplified to a high degree. If several domains in the picture are moved simultaneously, the possiblity of information delivery diminishes arithmetically.

5. Picture Definition

There is a great difference in picture definition, ranging from the full picture of reality on the television screen, to the scheme of painted, drawn or the animated picture. A real picture is perceptually a "multi-layered" picture, with long and complicated visual reading curve. The animated image is already visually synethtized by the artist. The viewer reads faster and in the remaining time (compared to the reality image) can either think about the picture, or cease the attention. This is the advantage and danger of TV graphics.

6. Video Picture Environment

There are three different environments in the television picture:

(a) physical env (sets, props)

(b) light environment (lighting or illumination of scene)

(c) human environment (actors, crew)

(a) Physical Environment (sets, props)

In the television image, limitations of screen size, definition of image, mobility of image, clearly indicate that the quantity of physical elements of image are extrapolated with quantity of information delivery.

The less elements a set has and the less props are used, the better the use of the physical environment we can make in the purse sense of television media.

The physical environment has three basic perception roles:

(1) Identification Role (space and time the viewer needs for identification of the object, time story).

(2) Reference Role: (viewer uses part of the set or prop for interrelation of space with actors, situations, distance or space of image).

(3) Stimulation Role: (viewer, if expecting the ending of the element, starts to stimulate himself to thinking beyond the object, into its meaning, due to the story, time, situation).

The change of roles must be identified in a TV program, otherwise the viewer becomes disoriented in time. The assumption of all three roles gives the information power of the set or prop. This power should be calculated by director/producer toward the semantic power of the story.

The set and props, together with the lighting and camera work, create the Image Space (real one - size of set in studio; virtual - scenographic one,

covered by the designer. In the video image environment has its counterpart the space of the TV image, projected in the viewer's mind, which has a real TV set in the studio only as a container to the final result.

(b) Light Environment

The lighting of a scene in a television picture usually brings very little semantic information delivery, associated with mood, emotions or the information guide. As such, it must have certain perceptions, changes, recognize and variations. This is contradicted very often by the evenly dispersed "general lighting" of a TV set from a light grid. Dramatic, or mood lighting enhances the information delivery of an unused information channel. Inversely, evenly dispersed lighting creates either a feeling of false reality or an increase in neural resistance (fatigue) of the viewer.

(c) Human Environment

Two main approaches are taken toward the human factor in the television image: either the director/producer leads the actor according to the story or the program, or the actor determines most of the action by himself. The first approach is more frequently used in the television drama, opera and ballet; the second one in variety shows, situation comedies, and talk shows.

The actor's action is a complex of differently coded messages, expressed by speech, body movements, gestures, and singing. The more determined (notated) the actor's action, the less unique the human environment is usually perceived in the televisual image (ballet, opera). The more improvisation on a scene with artificial or real feedback (studio shows with audience), the more the viewer becomes involved in the action, climax of the situations. The involvement of the viewer into the human environment (psychodramatic effect) greatly enhances the switching of communications codes, which otherwise consumes time in a television show.

7. Video Image/Sound Control

The final selection of the television show syntax (editing, switching of the show) has a great impact on the information delivery of the video event. In addition to the known, filmic impact of various editing schemes, ploys or routines, there is one, less known basic problem, specific to the television media. Due to the time compression, the cameras are switched in the studio control room on the command of the director, who determines the switch moment either intuitively, or according to the pre-arranged scheme. In both cases, cue times are guided logistically. But an excellent logistic editing scheme may contradict with the planned or accidental information loads of the selected camera, and the final picture is understood, but may be with a low climax, dull or undesirable to the viewer. Pre-taped television programmes have the advantage of film editing, but also, the television image from editing console may not match with the image delivered to the home TV set, or the state of mind the TV viewer is in.

It becomes more and more important to prepare the viewer on certain television programs and opening sequences (stereotyped teasers) preceeding and succeeding every part of the television serials. The teaser not only announces conditionning for the program, but also sets the pace, rhythm and mood for most of the television viewers.

8. Television Sound

Sound in television programs has three basic roles:

1. It supports, explains and narrates the picture.
2. It creates the mood, climax, allowing in the same time, the story to flow and progress.
3. It carries indirectional information, which otherwise could not be pronounced by the image.

Specific for television sound is that it can be separated from the image and stand independently for itself. Many songs, narratives and commentaries, written by artists with an inclination or previous praxis in the radio industry, have carried independency of soundtrack into a television production.

From the other point of view, television sound can be more easily included into the television image, by the immediacy of its character. In film, great accuracy of film sync is required for dialogues. In video programs, assynchronous sound is less embarrassing.

In recent years, sound is used more and more for the indirectional image created by the use of multichannel sound, spaced sound and kinephone.

III. VIDEOPSYCHOLOGY

This section will treat the differences between television and video, the use of "alternative" methods of videoprogramming, and video psychotherapy.

As the television industry expanded, we had the introduction of more efficient and minaturized methods of electronic information processing. A by-product of this new technology was the introduction in the North American market of the Sony VideoCorder and the Panasonic PortaPak. The new technology was quite portable and allowed individuals who were not connected with any part of the television industry to produce a televised image. Unlike home movie enthusiasts and photography album assemblers, the person with a working knowledge of portable video technology had at his or her command an immediate sound and visual playback system. The person could then use the technology anywhere for a purpose.

Initially the purposes were simple and unsophisticated. One could shoot people one knew in order to make a quick, "startling", "Television" show at home; one could interview people on the street to collect impressions and opinions so that he could replay them at his own discretion; one could tape a series of scenes to imitate the film process and produce a primative narrative. Essentially what was happening at this stage was that people were learning how to manipulate the video technology and attempting any type of production to discover what results would happen. No sooner was the technology on the streets than we had two major effects: (1) a proliferation of programming, content, styles and half-inch videotapes on the shelves of newly formed "video-theques", and (2) boredom.

Despite the introduction of basic editing facilities, it is justifiable to state that most of what was being produced was boring to the general viewing

public. When faced with a twenty minute videotape of someone cooking a meal, one can understand the disinterest on the part of people accustomed to viewing programs on broadcast television. A second reason for this disinterest is that videotapes, for the most part, were private. The material produced may well have been of interest to the producers and a small circle of acquaintences but was not really applicable to a mass audience. This is not to argue that a personal statement in any form may not interest a mass audience. Witness the number of successful autobiographies in various media. But a conversation between two or three people may well interest them and be of passing interest to an observor. The conversation is not a dramatic piece for the theatre. It is simply something of interest for the moment. The same may be true for most early and present video programming. Thus, audiences for such video programming <u>have not been mass audiences</u>.

This restriction in audience size may have been a blessing in disguise for video programmers. Instead of repeating television programming on videotape,* serious users of the medium began to see that portable video

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* Marshall McLuhan notes that the content of a new medium is always an old medium.

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provided a <u>unique communication tool for specified audience</u> groups. This trend took shape in two ways. Groups who were videotaped used the technology as a feedback device for themselves and, simultaneously, videotape producers sought out other audience groups who shared similar concerns as those of the original taping group.

In the first case, video technology became a fairly efficient behavioral tool. Video was used as a feedback device for physical activities (e.g. sports,

movement classes) and physical representations of internal processes (e.g., facial expressions communicating a particular message). Video technology also introduced the thinking processes of members of a particular group to others of the same group. This presentation of an individual's throughts may well be the single most important contribution of video to human communication to date.

Video users who see themselves as alternatives to regular television programming have insisted that VT is not TV. Essentially this is true. The uses of video that have been described illustrate that the people concerned in communities, groups, etc., are the people who produce and edit and make decisions about the final product. Also, the present state of the art necessitates that mass audiences are not the objective of video producers. On a technical level, broadcasters normally do not accept productions made with portable video equipment. * Therefore it is

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* Exceptions are Simples Histoires d'Amours, a two-hour video feature produced by l'Office National du Film du Canada and aired on Radio Canada in the spring of 1976, and the work of Top Value Television in the United States. We will discuss this U.S. work in section IV.

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necessary to differentiate between video and television.

Regarding the second point for discussion, the use of video as described above reintroduces the resonance theory of communication. As stated by Tony Schwartz, the principle of resonance is as follows:

> The critical task is to design our package of stimuli so that it resonates with information already stored within an individual and thereby induces the desired learning or behavioral effect. Resonance takes place when the stimuli put into our communicaiton evoke meaning in a listener or viewer. That which we put into the communication has no

> meaning in itself. The meaning of our communication is what a listener or viewer gets out of his experience with the communicator's stimuli. The listener's or viewer's brain is an indispensable component of the total communication system. *

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* Schwartz, Tony. The Responsive Chord. New York: Anchor Press/ Doubleday, 1973. pp. 24-25

This is not to deny the model of information chain or, as Schwartz calls it, the transformation model of communication. It is, however, to reaffirm that both modes of operation, both theoretical models, exist within a given communication context.* Video would seem to stress the resonance

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* Additional confirmation of this integrative approach is found in present research on the split hemisphere theory of the brain.

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model. Regular television programming would seem to stress the transportation model. In agreement with other media theorists,* Schwartz contends that

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* cf. M. McLuhan's Understanding Media, The Gutenberg Galaxy and E. Carpenter's Oh, What A Blow That Phantom Gave Me!

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electronic media have reintroduced the resonance principle to our thinking about communication theory.

Thus far we have discussed the use of alternative methods of video programming and the difference between VT and TV. One final note should consider video and psychotherapy.

Specifically, the authors would like to indicate how video, as defined above, is akin to practices in one form of psychotherapy: Gestalt therapy.

People inevitably become central to the production process if the approach is one where video is used to clarify goals for a given group or community. The technology itself places an emphasis on the presentness of an event since we are able to have immediate or even simultaneous playback. And thirdly, because videotape equipment is so portable and flexible, in most cases it is able to enter a human communication situation without too much disruption and blend into whatever happening is taking place. Hence the label, "an organic medium", has been applied to video technology.

The other principles of responsibility, balance between polarities and ego boundaries more aptly suit a discussion of the future of video.

On last aspect of video and psychology should be mentioned. In "Gestalt Therapy: Engaging the Video Subself",* Liles Grizzard discusses

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* Grizzard, Liles. In The Live Classroom: ..., ibid., pp. 57-62.

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the use of video technology for intrapersonal discovery and therapy. By introducing video to subself theory, Grizzard claims that the major benefit for one's personal growth is that an individual now has the opportunity to include this aspect of himself within his ego boundary or what one might call the area of one's personal awarness.

Grizzard feels that such an experience can be very rewarding and positive for individuals. He concludes that many people have been receiving much of their information for the past decades via television. As such, we have encountered the video subselves of television personalities without seeing our own.

The highest Aesthetical Impact of Video is a crossover of Information Quantity with Time, in which the even happens, resulting in an Information pattern Development, Appreciation and Retention.

In short, Television Video crowns man's mental association with many worlds - worlds of nations, ideas, civilizations, natures and universes.

Television is the farthest contemporary extension of man's mind and man's senses.

As defined in the beginning of this section, videoaesthetics involves a coincidence between logical, rational and emotional thinking. Because videoaesthetics involves an interplay between the medium and human beings, and because of the specific video projects outlined in section II, this discussion of Videoaesthetics will include the concept of meaning-making.

When one introduces the notion of broadcast television and electronic media one finds that we are dealing with a very total and pervasive force on values and change.* George Gerbner and Larry Gross of the Univer-

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* See George Comstock, Television and Human Behavior: The Key Studies. Santa Monica, California: The Rand Corporation, 1975.

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sity of Pennsylvania have, for some time now, been working on a project which they call Cultural Indicators. The project is meant to "relate a long term analysis of message systems (mostly television) to research on symbolic functions and how they cultivate popular notions about people and life."*

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* Gerbner, George. "Communication and Social Environment", in Communication: A Scientific American Book. San Francisco: W.H. Freeman and Company, 1972, p. 118.

One assumption of their work is that

> The most profound effects of communication can be found .... in the selective maintenance of relatively stable structures of images and associations that stem from institutional structures and policies and that define the common perspectives of a society. (p. 116)

What Gerbner and Gross highlight is that major institutions of communications play a large part in the maintenance of any system - whether or not the personnel of these media consciously choose to do so. Intent does not have to be a necessary prerequisite for eventual effects.

Drawing upon Gerbner's statement and upon the understanding of aesthetics in this article, video can be differentiated from television in that it gives people the opportunity to communicate their own perceptions and values, to make their own meanings. The discussion of video projects in the previous section indicates that citizens do indeed have the chance to affect other citizens as well as themselves to a greater or lesser degree. We do not pretend, however, that this use of video has the pervasive, institutional effect described by Gerbner.

Be that as it may, individuals and small groups of people have had the opportunity to use video in a more highly personal manner than broadcast television. And in this use of the medium, people have been able to define and clarify how meaningful a given situation is to them. Viewer-users (to introduce a term which defines the inter-relationship of observer and participant in video) have affected one another and are able to know how other viewer-users think and feel. This provides for some degree of common understanding among viewer-users, for definition of how any given context is understood by viewer-users, and for clarification of what is important and meaningful to them.

Television, as differentiated from video, is essentially one directional communication. Despite community programming, the technology of television prohibits active, functional, two-way flow of communication or multi-channel flow of communication between citizens. Video technology has started to turn this process around and it holds the potential for doing so even more in the future.

We can call upon Paulo Freire to clarify this difference in communication flows. Freire worked in Brazil during the early 1960's where he developed an approach for adult literacy training. In an essay entitled "Cultural Action for Conscientization", which appears in his Cultural Action for Freedom,* Freire speaks of revolutionary utopia. He sees this utopian

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* Published by Harvard Educational Review and Center for the Study of Development and Social Change, 1970.

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vision as tending

> .... to dialogue rather than mutism; .... to men who organize themselves for action rather than men who are organized for passivity; to creative and communicative language rather than prescriptive signals; to reflective challenges rather than domesticating slogans; and to values which are lived rather than myths which are imposed. (p. 44)

Critics of television see viewers who are "organized for passivity", who must hear "prescriptive signals", and domesticating slogans", and who learn imposed myths through present trends in programming, for example, media's view of women. Video, on the other hand, tends towards the opposites of these states as described by Freire. This is not to endow video with a magical, hypodermic effect. It is, however, to say that the technology of the video

medium creates opportunities for "action", "creative and communicative language", "reflective challenges", "dialogue", and "values which are lived", more readily than broadcast television.

One recent example of this comes from the work of Top Value Television in the United States. The members of this video group were considered part of the "underground" video movement in the late 1960's. In the past four or five years they have "surfaced" and produced videotapes with portable video equipment but they have changed the audience base. Instead of working with small groups of viewer-users, they have directed their productions to large viewing audiences through Public Television in the United States. What they have done is to take salient issues (e.g., the Richard Nixon campaign for re-election in 1972 and the Gerald Ford sojourn in the White House) and documented these issues through open-ended dialogue with people centrally involved in the issues. In the editing stage Top Value Television members utilized editing equipment which provided satisfactory image and sound quality for broadcast television. Then the programs were aired nationally.

What people saw on their television sets was an entirely different "documentary" than the ones to which they were accustomed from television networks. The difference resided on two levels: (1) the material chosen to be televised (ordinary people working or entertaining for the presidents in their own milieu without rehearsal or staging), and (2) an expression of values of the video producers which were not the expected, media-culture, institutional norms. The people of Top Value Television approached their task with their beliefs and values and this approach, inherently, defined the end product.

Working in this fashion with portable video equipment, video viewer-users are able to reach greater numbers of people. The community ceases to

be a small group of people and has the potential to be the nation. When broadcasting was established in Canada, for example, one wish of the initiators was that broadcasting would draw the nation together. The one dimensional flow of information via broadcast television generated a passive, recipient audience. The introduction of portable video allows people to reverse this trend, to integrate their logical, rational and emotional faculties in planning and producing video material, to unite the polar opposites by uniting people centered media and broadcast media, to allow people to define their own boundaries or limits and hence define what is meaningful to them, and, finally, to become responsible for their own actions and lives because they have the option to use a medium and act through it. Thus we were able to say at the start of this section on aesthetics that some video events, created by a few for a few, may be of significant aesthetical value.

IV. VIDEOAESTHETICS

Throughout history, "aesthetics" is understood as the "science of beauty" or the systematic, philosophical or scientific enquiry into the mystery of creative act.

One definition of videoaesthetic is broader. Within videoaesthetics belong all information impacts of television which create a coincidence between logical, rational and emotional thinking. In neurophysiological terms, the aesthetical action is the resonance or reflection between the excitation of specific neuronal circuitry of the brain neocortex and the brain (stress wave) reaction of unspecific neuronal circuitry.

Therefore, many television programs cannot be considered of aesthetical value, even if they consume a large part of the programming schedules and are seen by many viewers. On the other hand, some video events, created only by a few or for a few, may be of significant aesthetical value.

It should be distinguished that the aesthetical values of video events can stem from:

(1) The program itself (from its story of its form)

(2) The event coincidence with - time (J.F. Kennedy's funeral)
- associations of the individual (problem of truth and lies in Watergate)
- individual or group values (cultural, ethnic, national)

(3) The video interaction with - the individual (auto-impact)
- the group (video psycho-therapy)
- the viewer's community (indirectional "public opinion" TV impact)

The Aesthetical Impact of a video event does not result in an exactly formulated rule, knowledge or state of mind.

The highest Aesthetical Degree of Video is a confluence of Information Quantity with Time, in which the even happens, resulting in an Information pattern Development, Appreciation and Retention.

In short, Television Video creates man's mental association with many worlds - worlds of actions, ideas, civilizations, science and universe.

Television is the fastest contemporary extension of man's mind and man's senses.

V. TEACHING VIDEO

The teaching of video must be based on Paulo Freire's notion of praxis, that is, the authentic union of action and reflection. * (This

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* Freire, ibid., p. 48.

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means that people must do video and they must also know what they are doing and why they are doing it).

Therefore great reliance is placed on the knowledge of video theory, video aesthetics, history of video, video use, etc., in the current literature. Student demonstrations of such theory, aesthetic points, and use will follow through productions. Experimentation and mini-programs from 15 to 30 seconds in length is used to explore video properties such as motion, light, texture. *

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* See the work and writings of Herbert Zettl of California State University of San Francisco.

Personal projects can be assigned. More technical exercises making explicit the distinctions between film, television and video is used. Since we accept the notion of praxis, research is a major component in any work.

The authors do not see the teaching of video as solely a technical training procedure. Were we to "produce" competent people able to handle the technology, we would proliferate society with people able to perform only certain specificed tasks. With the rapid change in electronic technology we need to be concerned with people who are more than competent executioners of technological functions. Educatees must be competent in the

technological functions. Educatees must be competent in the technological domain. But, at the same time, they must be competent thinkers, competent problem "formulators" as well as competent problem solvers, competent at pattern recognition, as McLuhan puts it.

Nor do the authors see the teaching of video as a purely academic discipline, devoted solely to conceptualizing about video and researching the field. To initiate such a course would be the same as asking a person to become literate without giving her the opportunity to learn how to write. Not knowing how to manipulate the tools for a given purpose and then actually doing it, provides an equal disservice to educatees.